

Message Text

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ACTION HA-02

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 12732

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: INFORMATION FROM BOAT REFUGEE INTERVIEWS

REF: HONG KONG 11819

1. WOMAN WHO ARRIVED HERE WITH CHILD IN GROUP OF 121 REGUEES
TOLD US SHE SPENT OVER 40 TAEELS GOLD IN ATTEMPTS LEAVE
VIETNAM. IN FIRST ATTEMPT, SHE WAS ARRANGING WITH SYNDICATE
FOR ESCAPE, BUT WAS ROBBED OF 18 TAEELS AND ARRANGEMENT FELL
THROUGH. SHE THEN SPENT 12 TAEELS TRYING OBTAIN TAIWAN
PASSPORT FOR ENTRY INTO TAIWAN, BUT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL.
THIRD EFFORT WAS TO TRY TO OBTAIN FRENCH TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION,
BUT THAT ALSO FAILED COSTING HER 10 TAEELS GOLD. SHE THEN
LEARNED THROUGH ANOTHER WOMAN OF SYNDICATE ORGANIZING
GROUP FOR ESCAPE. SINCE SHE COULD NOT PAY IN VIETNAM, SHE
AGREED TO PAY 10 TAEELS GOLD TO THIS WOMAN UPON ARRIVAL
HONG KONG. SHE OBTAINED THIS MONEY AFTER ARRIVAL HERE
AND PAID FEE.. FROM WHAT OTHER REFUGEES HAVE TOLD US,
IT APPEARS THAT CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE.

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2. WE OBTAINED MORE INFORMATION ON DEPARTURE OF THE 410
WHIPPLE REFUGEES, (SEE HONG KONG 11684). THE GROUP
ORIGINATED FROM VARIOUS PLACES IN VIETNAM, INCLUDING
NORTH VIETNAM. THEY ASSEMBLED IN VUNG TAU AT DIFFERENT
LOCATIONS AND WERE PICKED UP BY ARMY TRUCKS TO BE
TRANSPORTED TO SMALL BOATS, WHICH THEY TOOK TO JOIN
REFUGEE BOAT. AFTER REFUGEE BOAT DEPARTED, PUMPS BROKE

DOWN AND REFUGEE BOAT RETURNED TO VUNG TAU FOR REPAIRS. REFUGEES WERE PICKED UP BY ARMY TRUCKS AND TAKEN BACK TO BOARDING HOUSES OR OTHER PLACES TO WAIT. AFTER REPAIRS WERE MADE, REFUGEE BOAT DEPARTED BUT WAS INTERCEPTED BY VIETNAMESE PATROL BOAT. ONE REFUGEE SHOWED VIETNAMESE NAVAL PERSONNEL SOME TYPE OF PASS OR DOCUMENT, BUT REFUGEE BOAT WAS ORDERED BACK TO VUNG TAU FOR VERIFICATION. REFUGEE BOAT THEN DEPARTED VUNG TAU AND PROCEEDED ONWARDS WHERE IT FINALLY ENCOUNTERED USS WHIPPLE.

3. HONG KONG IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS DEBRIEF BOAT REFUGEES UPON BEING LANDED. WE WERE GIVEN REPORT CONCERNING GROUP OF 163 REFUGEES WHO ARRIVED HERE SEPT. 4. ACCORDING TO REPORT, TRIP WAS ARRANGED BY SYNDICATE THROUGH VARIOUS ORGANIZERS AT MINIMUM CHARGE OF 1 Tael GOLD PER HEAD AND 50 TAEELS TO BRIBE LOCAL VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS. EXCEPT FOR FOUR PERSONS GROUP WAS COMPOSED OF SINO-VIETNAMESE FROM DIFFERENT CITIES IN VIETNAM. REFUGEE BOAT LEFT QUANG NGHIA ON AUGUST 20, BUT ENCOUNTERED TYPHOON AND WAS RESCUED BY TWO PRC JUNSS WHICH TOWED REFUGEE BOAT TO YEUNG KONG, PRC. THEY WERE HOUSED THERE AT SHA PA COMMUNE, PAYING APPROXIMATELY \$100 DAILY FOR FOOD AND LODGING. PAYMENTS WERE MADE IN GOLD, VALUABLES, WATCHES AND FOREIGN CURRENCY. GROUP DEPARTED PRC ON SEPT. 3 FOR HONG KONG.

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4. SINCE WE HAD TO PROCESS THE 171 REFUGEES ON "AMERICAN MOHAWK" QUICKLY, WE DID NOT OBTAIN MUCH INFORMATION ON DEPARTURE ARRANGEMENTS. GROUP LEFT QUI NHON AND ALSO PAID ABOUT 50 TAEELS GOLD TO LOCAL VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS.

5. FROM WHAT REFUGEES HERE TELL US, MORE PERSONS IN VIETNAM ARE INVOLVED IN ORGANIZING ESCAPES THAN PREVIOUS. ORGANIZERS NOW INCLUDE ETHNIC VIETNAMESE, WHO MAY BE LOCAL OFFICIALS. WHILE EVERY LARGE GROUP ARRIVING HERE IS COMPRISED OF SINO-VIETNAMESE, THERE ARE SOME ETHNIC VIETNAMESE MIXED IN, SOME OF WHOM APPARENTLY ARE ABLE TO JOIN GROUPS THROUGH INFLUENCE, THAT IS, GOOD CONNECTIONS.
SHOESMITH

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